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House of Representatives

The House met at 9 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. PRICE of Georgia).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

WASHINGTON, DC,

May 24, 2005.

I hereby appoint the Honorable TOM PRICE to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

J. DENNIS HASTERT,

Speaker of the House of Representatives.

MORNING HOUR DEBATES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 4, 2005, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning hour debates. The Chair will alternate recognition between the parties, with each party limited to not to exceed 25 minutes, and each Member, except the majority leader, the minority leader, or the minority whip, limited to not to exceed 5 minutes, but in no event shall debate extend beyond 9:50 a.m.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. BLUMENAUER) for 5 minutes.

FUND CLEAN-UPS FOR CLOSED MILITARY BASES

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, this week, with the consideration of the defense authorization legislation and the military quality of life appropriation, Congress should deal with the hidden issue behind base closure: The toxic legacy of unexploded bombs and hazardous pollution left behind on our military bases.

This is part of a much larger problem. The Defense Science Board has re-

ported that unexploded bombs contaminate an area bigger than the States of Maryland, and Massachusetts combined.

One out of ten Americans live within 10 miles of a former or current military site that contains hazardous waste identified for clean-up under the Federal Super Fund programs. Indeed, 34 bases shut down since 1988 are still on the EPA Super Fund lists of worst toxic waste sites.

Ten of these sites have groundwater mitigation contaminants that are not fully under control. One of the worst examples that comes to mind is the Massachusetts Military Reservation, a source of perchlorate, a toxic chemical, has contaminated 70 percent of Cape Cod's water supply, and more than 1,000 unexploded bombs have been discovered, some less than a half a mile from an elementary school.

Former military installations with unexploded bombs are located in hundreds of communities across the country. And this has serious consequences. The most tragic example was an unexploded bomb that killed two 8-year-old boys and injured a 12-year-old friend while they were playing in their San Diego neighborhood, the site of the former 32,000 acre Camp Elliot, used as a training site during World War II.

In Texas, South Carolina, California, Colorado, Massachusetts, and even here in Washington D.C., developers have built residential and business projects on land that has not been fully cleared of unexploded bombs.

Since I have been in Congress, three times fire fighters have had to be pulled out of the woods, in Alaska, Texas and Colorado, because the heat from the forest fire was detonating bombs.

Now, closed military bases can present significant opportunities for community assets. The former Lowry Air Force Base in Denver has generated an estimated \$4 billion in economic activity for that region.

With careful planning, the facility made the successful transition to civilian use, including 4,500 new homes and more than a square acre of park land, two community colleges and other schools.

Glenview, Illinois, which lost its Naval Air Station in 1993, is another example that is now home to office space, retail stores, residences, golf course, park land and a train station. That has created 5,000 jobs and put another \$1.5 billion into that local economy.

Yet the reality for communities facing BRAC now, according to the GAO, is that more than a quarter of the bases previously closed have not been cleaned up and transferred. And the main impediment is the bombs and chemical pollution.

Mr. Speaker, it is time for Congress to no longer be missing in action. When we look at like Fort Ord, closed in 1991, and after a decade of redevelopment only 25 percent of its transformation plan has been completed, in large measure because it has not been able to deal with the clean-up of the site.

So far the Army has cleared just 5 percent of the base's firing range. And they have already unearthed 8,000 live shells, in a job at this rate that could take 20 years.

Our communities deserve better. It is time for us in Congress to no longer be missing in action. We should do two things this week. First we should not pass the defense authorization bill without amending it to require that the military plan and budget to clean up the military bases that it has already closed, before starting a new round of BRAC.

Second, in the military quality of life bill, we should allocate funds to clean up unexploded bombs and dangerous pollution. To clean up the unexploded bombs just in the 1988 round would cost \$69 million, clearly within our capacity. Indeed, I would argue that we

□ This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., □ 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.



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